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The wreath of fashion

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THE

WREATH of FASHION,

OR, THE

Art of Sentimental Poetry.

———*Demetri, teq. Tigelli,*
Discipularum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

HORACE.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following lines were occaſioned by the Author's having lately ſtudied, with infinite attention, ſeveral faſhionable productions in the *Sentimental* ſtile; in moſt of which, a miſapplication, not a defect, of talents ſeems to have betrayed their Authors into ſome degree of falſe Taſte. For example. A Noble Author has lately publiſhed his works, which conſiſt of *three* compoſitions. *One*, an Ode upon the death of Mr. Gray: the *two* others, upon the death of his Lordſhip's *Spaniel*.

But the reigning faſhion in modern *poeſy* is *Sentimental Panegyric* on *Married Beauties*. This appears in a thouſand various Shapes; from *Bouts Rhimeès* on the *wou'd-be Sappho* of Bath, up to *Doggerel Epiſtles* to the lovely *Amoret*.

In attempting to ridicule this modiſh folly, it is ſcarcely neceſſary to apologize to the ſeveral Perſonages of the *Sentimental train*, for introducing their names. When a Poet announces himſelf, and publicly

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publicly wears his Laurels, He is lawful game for the Critics: And it makes no difference, whether his works come from the Preſs, or, according to Sir *Benjamin Backbite*'s ſyſtem, "*circulate in Manuſcript.*" Beſides, to canvaſs the *ſlighter imperfections*, either of ſtile or of conduct, ſeems to be the limit of poetical cenſure. It is only the deſperate Satyriſt, whoſe invenomed pen ſtrikes at the character and honour of Individuals, that perverts and diſgraces Poetry:---Such aſperſions, if well founded, are too groſs for the tribunal of the Muſes; and if, (as is generally the caſe) they are utterly falſe, they recoil not only on the Author, but on the very art itſelf, which can ſo eaſily be perverted to ſo bad a Purpoſe. - - - But who can be hurt by a Critique on his *Charades* and *Rebuſſes?*---An imputation of falſe Taſte may not be very pleaſant, but it never can ſeriouſly offend Men of ſenſe and good-breeding: Both which qualities, as the Author agrees with all the world in acknowledging *his Perſonages* to poſſeſs in the higheſt degree, ſo he requeſts that not only they, but the few others who may happen to read his Poem, will acquit him of any intention to give the ſlighteſt offence.

THE

THE

WREATH of FASHION.

WHEN firſt the Muſe recorded Beauty's praiſe
In glowing numbers, and enraptur'd lays,
Sweet was the Poet's ſong; undeck'd by art;
For Love was Nature, and his theme the heart.
At Beauty's ſhrine how brightly Genius glow'd!
There, her wild wreaths luxuriant fancy ſtrew'd;
Whoſe flowrets, wak'd by Love's enliv'ning ray,
Scatter'd with native ſweets the artleſs lay.
Such were the ſtrains th' enamour'd *Ovid* ſung;
Such the fond lays that flow'd from *Prior*'s tongue:

Nor of its beſt reward was verſe beguil'd,
When *Julia* own'd its pow'r, and *Chloe* ſmil'd.

Far other lays denote the modern Bard---
Nor love his theme---nor Beauty his reward :
His temp'rate verſe a gentler homage pays,
And ſighs ſerenely for unfeeling praiſe.

This purer taſte, this philoſophic art,
(If thou, O Sentiment! thy aid impart)
The Muſe ſhall ſing---attend ye glitt'ring train
Of ſighing Beaux, nor ſcorn the votive ſtrain ;
Tho' harſh the verſe, tho' rude the unpoliſh'd lay,
Soft is the tender ſcience they diſplay.

Firſt, for true grounds of Sentimental lore,
The ſcenes of modern Comedy explore ;
Dramatic Homilies! devout and ſage,
Stor'd with wiſe maxims, " both for youth and age."

Maxims

Maxims, that ſcorning their old homely dreſs,
Shift from plain proverbs to ſpruce ſentences,
But chief, let *Cumberland* thy Muſe direct:
High Prieſt of all the Tragic-comic ſect!
Mid darts and flames his Lover *cooly* waits;
Calm as a Hero, cas'd in *Hartley*'s *plates*;
'Till damp'd, and chill'd, by ſentimental ſighs,
Each ſtifled paſſion in a vapour dies.

Hence form thy taſte, hence ſtrew thy temp'rate lays
With moral raptures, and ſententious praiſe.

Thus ſkill'd, with critic care, thy ſubject chooſe;
A kindred theme, congenial to thy Muſe.
No giddy Nymph, of youth and beauty vain,
But ſome fair Stoic, link'd in Hymen's chain:
Serene and cold; by wiſe Indiff'rence led
To a rich Title, and a---ſep'rate bed.

Now,

Now, ſick of vanity, with grandeur cloy'd,
She leans on Sentiment, to ſooth the void:
Deep in Rouſſeau, her purer thoughts approve
The Metaphyſics of Platonic Love.
Thine be the taſk, with quaint, fantaſtic phraſe,
To variegate her unimpaſſion'd praiſe.

Poetic Compliments from Sonnets cull---
Harmonious quibbles, logically dull!
True to their age of Paradox, they chime
Problems in verſe, and ſophiſtry in rhyme---
Yet, thro' theſe *lymbecks*, Cowley's patient Muſe
From mimic ſighs diſtill'd Caſtalian dews;
So Spencer toil'd, to ſooth the Royal Maid;
So hapleſs Petrarch wept his Laura's ſhade.

But hence, tame Precept!---let example lead
The modiſh Poet to his glorious meed:

Haſte

Haſte, to the radiant ſhrine of Faſhion, haſte!
There, form thy genius, there, correct thy taſte.

And lo! the glitt'ring Altar ſtands confeſt!
Looſe o'er the Goddeſs floats her motley veſt:
As Flora, gay, as Iris, wildly bright,
Its varying luſtre ſtrikes the dazzled ſight.
Here, Vanity, with flow'rs and feathers crown'd,
Sports with the Seaſons thro' their airy round.
Here, ſpurious Art and mimic Science pour
Whims of a day, and theories of an hour.
The Goddeſs ſmiles; for, lo! even Poets trace
Her local charms, her temporary grace---
Above the reſt, how fondly ſhe regards
Her fav'rite train, the Sentimental Bards!

On a ſpruce pedeſtal of *Wedgwood ware*,
Where motley forms, and tawdry emblems glare,

Behold ſhe conſecrates to cold applauſe,
A Petrefaction, work'd into a *Vaſe*:
The Vaſe of Sentiment!---to this impart
Thy kindred coldneſs, and congenial art.
Here, (as in humbler ſcenes, from *Cards* and *Gout*,
Millar convenes her literary Rout)
With votive ſong, and tributary verſe,
Faſhion's gay train her gentle rites rehearſe.
What ſoft poetic incenſe breathes around!
What ſoothing hymns from Adulation ſound!

Here, placid *Carliſle* breathes his gentle line,
Or haply, gen'rous *Hare*, re-echoes thine:
Soft flows the lay; as when, with tears, He paid
The laſt ſad honours to his---Spaniel's ſhade!
And lo! he graſps the badge of wit, a wand;
He waves it thrice, and *Storer* is at hand;

Famiſh'd

Famiſh'd as penance, as devotion pale,
Plaintive, and pert, He murmurs a Love-tale.
Fitzpatrick's Muſe waits for ſome lucky hit;
For, ſtill the ſlave of Chance, He *throws* at wit.
While *Townſhend* his pathetic bow diſplays,
And Princely Boothby ſilent homage pays.

With *chips* of wit, and mutilated lays,
See *Palmerſton* fineer his *Bout*'s *Rhimeès*.
Fav'rite of ev'ry Muſe, elect of Phœbus,
To ſtring Charades, or fabricate a Rebus.
Bereft of ſuch a guide, old Ocean, mourn
Thy fading glories, and thy laurels torn! *
'Twas *Palmerſton* repell'd each hoſtile wrong,
Like Ariel, wrecking Navies with---a Song;

* Upon Lord Palmerſton's appointment to the Treaſury, Lord Mulgrave ſucceeded to his Place at the Admiralty Board.—"*Mira canam; Sol occubuit, nox nulla ſecuta eſt.*"——

But

But ſee, by pitying Fate his loſs ſupplied;
For *Mulgrave* joins where ſenſe and *Sandwich* guide.
Mulgrave! whoſe Muſe nor winds nor waves controul,
Could bravely pen Acroſtics---on *the Pole*.
Warm with poetic fire the Northern air,
And ſooth with tuneful raptures--*the great Bear*;
Join but his poetry to *Burgoyne*'s proſe,
Armies ſhall *fall aſleep*; and Pyrates *doze*.
So when the rebel-winds on Neptune fell,
They ſunk to reſt, at ſound of Triton's ſhell.

" If *Placemen* thus poetic honours prize,
" Shall I be mute?" (the laureat *Whitehead* cries.)
" What if ſome rival Bard my empire ſhare!
" Yet, yet, I tremble at the name of *Clare*. *
" *Pindar*

* Whoever has read his Lordſhip's verſes, preſented to her Majeſty, with a gift of *Iriſh Poplin*, and that too on a *New Year's Day*, will not wonder at the jealouſy and apprehenſion the Laureat expreſſes of

" *Pindar* to *Clare* had yielded---ſo did I---
" Alas, can Poetry wth *Poplin* vie!
" Ah me! if Poets *barter* for applauſe,
" How *Jerningham* will thrive on flimſy *gauſe!*
" What tatter'd tinſel *Luttrel* will diſplay!
" *Carmarthen* ſattin---*Carliſle* paduaſoy!
" *Garrick* will follow his old remnant trade;
" He'll buy my place with *Jubilee brocade.*
" While *Anſley*, the reverſion to obtain,
" Vamps his *Bath drugget*, till he ſpoils the grain.
" Periſh the thought! hence viſionary fear!
" Phœbus, or Phædrus, ſhall old *Whitehead* cheer.
" Behold their nobler gift---be this preferr'd!"
---He ſaid--and proudly brandiſh'd the *Goat's beard*,

of ſo formidable a rival.—The recollection of the Poplin leads to a digreſſion, in the Pindaric ſtile of all Laureats, on the fatal conſequences that might follow from eſtabliſhing Lord Clare's method of tacking a preſent to every Poem — but the Laureat recovers his ſpirits, by thinking of the laſt production of his own Muſe — *the Goat's Beard* — ſpun from Ten lines of Phædrus, to Four Hundred of Whitehead.——

Then dropt it in the *Vaſe*---immers'd it falls
Mid Sonnets, Odes, Acroſtics, Madigrals:
A motley heap of metaphoric ſighs---
Laborious griefs, and ſtudied extaſies---
Yet hence how warm each tuneful Suppliant's claim!
What palpitations for his *mite* of fame!
Alas! regardleſs of their equal toils,
Faſhion ſtill wildly ſcatters random ſmiles.
And Colman *may* (if Billy Woodfall's by
To prop him up) attract her vagrant eye.

Behold, one dunce, by her profound decree,
Supreme Dictator of the Coterie:
Prim, plauſible, oracular, and ſage,
The native *Texier* of the wond'ring age!
The ſolemn coxcomb never talks---his frown
Is conſtant obloquy, his ſmile renown:

Words

Words would degrade this literary God :
He gives his fiat with a ſilent nod.

Another's fame more gentle honour, tell ;
Familiar Critic of each bright *Ruelle !*
Soon as the orient beam of Beauty's ray
Diſcloſes, juſt at noon, the dawn of day ;
And *Dev'nſhire* wakes!---" *and Piccadilly's gay*;"
Perch'd at her Grace's toilet, *Minim* ſits,
The little Scholiaſt of the Female Wits.
Tir'd of conjecture, and perplex'd with doubt,
To him they fly---to make a riddle out ;
To pierce a paragraph's myſterious vail ;
And eke out Scandal's heſitating tale.
With conſcious pride the flippant Witling ſhares
His motley taſk of miſcellaneous cares ;
Expounds *Charades*, thro' cloſe detraction pryes,
Conſtrues *initials*, and the *blanks* ſupplies.

And oft, with varied art, his thoughts digreſs
On deeper themes---the documents of dreſs:
With nice diſcernment, to each ſtile of face
Adapt a ribbon, or ſuggeſt a lace;
O'er *Granby*'s cap bid loftier feathers float,
And add new bows to *Devon*'s petticoat.---

Others, reſolv'd more ample fame to boaſt,
Plant their own Laurels in the *Morning Poſt*.
Soft *Evening* dews refreſh the tender green:
Paſs but a Month, it ſwells each *Magazine*;
'Till the luxuriant bows ſo wildly ſhoot,
The *Annual Regiſter* tranſplants the root---
But theſe are ſpurious honours, not the true,
Who ſhall obtain *The Wreath of Faſhion*---who?

The *wily Charles* long flouriſh'd o'er the reſt;
Expert to argue or to flatter beſt:

For,

For, born a Diſputant, a Sophiſt bred,
His Nurſe He ſilenc'd, and his Tutor led:
But hail'd, with filial duty's pious ſenſe,
His Sire's beſt gift---deluſive Eloquence.
That art to cheriſh, with a laviſh pride
His kindred Genius ev'ry pow'r ſupplied:
Perſuaſion's breath---to ſwell the Stateſman's ſail:
Or, if his fancy veer, retard the gale.
Soft words---to mollify the Miſer's breaſt,
And lull relenting Uſury to reſt.
Bright beams of wit---to ſtill the raging Jew;
His black'ning miſts diſſolve to golden dew,
Teach him to dun no more, and lend anew!

Here, C*harles* his native eloquence refin'd;
Pleas'd at the Toilet, in the Senate ſhin'd:
And North approv'd---and *Amoret* look'd kind,

'Till, fond too ſoon his ſelfiſh pride to trace,
He loſt at once his laurels and---his place.

At Faſhion's ſhrine, behold a gentler Bard,
Gaze on the myſtic *Vaſe* with fond regard---
But ſee, Thalia checks the doubtful thought.
"Can'ſt thou (ſhe cries) with ſenſe, with genius fraught,
" Can'ſt thou to Faſhion's tyranny ſubmit,
" Secure in native, independent wit?
" Or yield to Sentiment's inſipid rule,
" By Taſte, by Fancy, chac'd thro' *Scandal's School?*
" Ah, no!---be *Sheridan*'s the comic page;
" Or let me fly with *Garrick* from the Stage."

Haſte then, my Friend, (for let me boaſt that name)
Haſte to the op'ning path of genuine Fame:
Or, if thy Muſe a gentler theme purſue,
Ah, 'tis to Love, and thy Eliza, due!

For

For ſure the ſweeteſt lay ſhe well may claim,
Whoſe ſoul breathes harmony o'er all her frame;
While wedded Love, with ray ſerenely clear,
Beams from her eye, as from its proper ſphere.

--But thou, for whom the Muſe firſt tun'd the lyre,
Vot'ry of Sentiment, do thou aſpire,
With ſtudious toil, to win that bright reward,
The Wreath of Faſhion for her choſen Bard.
Not rudely wove with Nature's ſhort-liv'd ſtore,
(The ſimple meed her humble Poet wore)
But ſpruce and trim, as ſuits thy kindred pow'rs,
With mimic buds, and artificial flow'rs.

Bleſt Wreath! whoſe flowrets dread no vulgar doom
Of fading hues, or tranſitory bloom;
Above the fleeting pride of Flora's day,
Thy vivid foliage never can decay!

There

There, vi'lets, pinks, and lilies of the vale,
Deſpiſe the ſultry beam, or chilly gale;
There, fix'd as *Archer's* rouge, the mimic roſe,
With perſevering bluſh, for ever glows;
There, myrtles bloom, that ſhame the Cyprian fields;
There, bays, immortal as Parnaſſus yields---

Triumphant art! Let vanquiſh'd nature mourn
Her loſt ſimplicity, o'er *Shenſtone*'s urn:
With ſympathetic ſorrows, on *his* tomb
Let the pale primroſe ſhed its wild perfume;
The cowſlip droop its head; and all around
The with'ring violet ſtrew the hallow'd ground---
For, mute the ſwain, and cold the hand, that wove
Their ſimple ſweets to wreaths of artleſs love---
Simplicity with *Shenſtone* died!---

THE END.

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